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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/714,637	11/16/2000	Kouichi Matsuda	203828US6	5346

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, CAO H

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2173

DATE MAILED: 01/23/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/714,637

Applicant(s)

MATSUDA, KOUICHI

Examiner

Cao (Kevin) Nguyen

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 November 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18, 20 and 21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14, 17-18 and 21 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 15, 16 and 20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 15-16 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tahtinen (EP 0797338) in view of Leahy et al. (US Patent No. 6,219,045).

Regarding claims 15 and 20, Leahy discloses a conversation support method for supporting an activity of an avatar in a shared virtual space built and provided on a computer network, comprising receiving a request for sending a message from said avatar (see abstract and (see col. 3, lines 4-34); however, Leahy fails to explicitly teach determining whether a destination of said message exists in the real world; and executing connection processing in accordance with the determination made by the determining step.

Tahtinen discloses determining whether a destination of said message exists in the real world; and executing connection processing in accordance with the determination made by the determining step (Tahtinen: column 1, lines 3-58 and col. 2, lines 1-35). It would have been obvious to one of an ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Leahy and Tahtinen before

him at the time the invention was made, to modify activity of an avatar in a shared virtual space of Leahy to include message exists in the real world, as taught by Tahtinen. One would have been motivated to make such a combination in order to provide a virtual environment users, which have entered the virtual world, can communicate with other users by means of an avatar.

Regarding claim 16, Leahy discloses wherein, if said destination of said message is found in the real world, said step of executing connection processing establishes a connection with said destination through a public telephone network in the real world or executes message transfer (see col. 3, lines 22-58).

Response to Amendment

Applicant's arguments filed 11/01/05 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

On page 13 of the remarks, Applicant argues that Leahy and Tahtinen do not teach or suggest "determining whether a destination of the message exists in the real world". The examiner respectfully disagrees. As shown in figure 1, Tahtinen teaches a virtual reality world and the real world for the purpose of establishing a real time communications connection such as telephone call connection, and the virtual reality world may be implemented by means of a VRML application in which user can navigate using a browser, as recited in column 1-2, lines 1-60.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-14, 17-18 and 21 are allowed over the prior art.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure (see PTO-892).

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

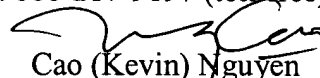
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cao (Kevin) Nguyen whose telephone number is (571)272-4053. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:00PM.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Cabeca can be reached on (571)272-4048. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571)-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Cao (Kevin) Nguyen
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2173

01/18/06